

**Building on Momentum: A Look at Ward 6 Middle Schools**  
**Summary of Worksheet Responses**  
**April 26, 2010**

**Number of Worksheets Submitted: 28**

**Worksheet Question #1: Are these the core components of middle school reform?**

Core Component	Verbatim comments
Academic Rigor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The IB program is extremely important</li> <li>• STEM - computer</li> <li>• Writing</li> <li>• Strong and broad academic curriculums: English, Math, geography, history, languages, science, etc.</li> <li>• Academic rigor for kids at all levels of academic performance, including special ed</li> <li>• High school and college prep: basic proficiency for all students</li> <li>• Language: Spanish, Latin, ENGLISH</li> <li>• Foreign languages in MS to (also) pave the way to IB @ Eastern (great idea!!)</li> <li>• I want to emphasize academic rigor, especially intensive intervention for struggling students. This is NOT currently happening at Jefferson.</li> </ul>
School Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture needs to be inclusive and embrace diversity</li> <li>• Strong leadership -- internal, community, etc.</li> <li>• An effective teaching and administrative team is far and away the most important component, to establish an effective learning environment. Programs come second -- high quality, rigorous, well-taught, in high-quality facilities</li> <li>• Administrative and staff continuity</li> <li>• Diversity that spans ethnicity and socioeconomic backgrounds</li> <li>• Life skills</li> </ul>
Program Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need a clear vision for Eastern and how the feeder patterns will work and compliment with each other</li> </ul>
Grade Configuration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I LOVE the idea of returning 5th graders to Watkins ES</li> <li>• Cons of PK-8: Since middle school years are teenager age, I am not sure having such big age differences would help much in focusing / school cultures building, etc.</li> <li>• I think preK-8 schools are not sound both educationionally and</li> </ul>

	<p>economically</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not sure that expansion of elementary schools (thru 8th) makes sense.</li> <li>• No prek-8; too small of an enrollment to offer what middle schools have in order to be ready for high school!</li> <li>• PK-8 option is important -- older kids serve as leaders to younger ones. Stave off influence of 9-12 peer pressure. Grades 6-8 tend to study well in prep for HS. Smallness is great for nurturing individuals and leadership</li> </ul>
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#### OTHER COMMENTS:

- Absolutely -- I am just surprised that it should be called a "reform", for me, as a teacher, these are all components of what should be "a schools." So what's going on in the schools, since it seems we have to reinvent "school."
- Who can argue with goals of academic rigor, safe and effective schools, etc? Sure, these are the right components -- the trick is how we get there.
- What I'd get at Deal, [is] what I want at Stuart-Hobson: Academic rigor, safety/culture, comprehensive extracurricular opportunities, program alignment, excellent facilities
- Please consider feeding Ludlow-Taylor to Stuart-Hobson... Makes geographic sense for in-bounds parents.
- Put expanded Montessori in Logan Building (x2)
- Stuart-Hobson is at 75%-75% CAS proficiency with great leadership and faculty. Protect and preserve it.
- Eliot-Hine families have disappointed twice in 3 years -- closing of Hine and Eastern. Yet under great principal and new faculty, CAS scores are up +88% to +91% over 2 years. Incredible! Applaud and support that team, and do not disrupt families' plans again. Jefferson's scores are up -- promote Jefferson's strengths to Ward 6 parents who know little about Jefferson.
- Additional important component is geographical location. Feeder patterns, etc. It is hard to see a lot of schools feeding into Jefferson because it is so remote and such a different neighborhood than most Ward 6 elementary schools are in.
- IB @ Stuart-Hobson and Eastern is a great model to ensure academic excellence and or new/positive school culture. Please add German as one of the foreign languages!

#### Worksheet Question #2: What is missing?

Theme	Verbatim comments
Effective school staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold teachers accountable - rigorous hiring</li> <li>• Let go those who are not performers</li> <li>• High expectations for kids</li> <li>• Good communication between parents, teachers, and administrators - so important w/ middle schoolers</li> <li>• Strong communication -- teacher/child, administrators/families</li> <li>• Great leadership, continuity in leadership</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrative rigor -- i.e. high quality administration and high quality teachers</li> <li>• Strong leadership at principal and assistant principal levels</li> <li>• Qualified and motivated administrators and educators.</li> <li>• Excellent teaching / teachers</li> </ul>
Diverse course selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community involvement as part of curriculum</li> <li>• Partnerships w/ VAST resources in DC around core content</li> <li>• Music/arts/theater</li> <li>• Arts</li> <li>• Sport/health</li> <li>• International Baccalaureate</li> <li>• IB should be offered at all high-performing middle schools especially Stuart-Hobson -- the only middle school to score higher is Deal.</li> <li>• Technology</li> <li>• Built-in character development (ie Voices Reading)</li> <li>• Character development</li> <li>• Science labs, math</li> <li>• Financial literacy</li> <li>• SKILLS rather than content/courses: engagement in learning/love of learning, critical thinking, collaboration</li> <li>• Quality academic, arts, foreign language, sports programs as part of the ES and MS curriculum</li> <li>• Academic rigor for students performing above grade level (Jefferson in particular)</li> </ul>
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High-quality facilities / physical plant</li> <li>• Excellent facilities</li> <li>• Clean, modernized facilities</li> <li>• Basic maintenance and building quality</li> <li>• An analysis of facilities needs to be integral to this process</li> <li>• Improved academic facilities, improved physical plant, both indoors and out is necessary to improve school culture. ARTS INTEGRATION! If Stuart-Hobson will be renovated, it MUST be a true -- down to the studs - renovation!</li> <li>• Good facilities</li> </ul>
Extracurriculars / Athletics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extracurriculars</li> <li>• Broad, comprehensive extracurricular opportunities (athletics, chess, orchestra, etc.)</li> <li>• Sports and extracurricular activities</li> <li>• Cohesive and well-resourced extracurricular activities -- music (instruments), sports, debate club, newspaper, arts</li> <li>• quality academic, arts, foreign language and sports programs on-site after school in school-run extracurricular activities.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athletics</li> <li>• Extracurricular opportunities</li> </ul>
Feeder patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeder patterns that make sense. Ludlow-Taylor should feed into Stuart-Hobson! (lots of our in-bounds kids are residentially in-bounds anyway, and it's 2 blocks away)</li> </ul>
Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy food offerings</li> <li>• Uniforms</li> <li>• We also need to focus systemically on having a DCPS accelerated/advanced/"gifted" program available to ALL students and schools</li> <li>• Parent involvement</li> <li>• Community engagement in Ward 6</li> <li>• Wrap-around services</li> <li>• Leadership opportunities</li> <li>• Ensure students are receiving opportunities to prepare for rigorous, excellent and selective high schools</li> <li>• Awareness and consciousness of whole community</li> <li>• Vertical integration</li> </ul>

#### OTHER COMMENTS:

- Is it realistic for the middle schools to accomodate all the different options currently offered at the Hill elementary schools? What types of extracurricular/elective options will be available (technology, music, sports)?
- Please consider IB middle years program for both Eliot-Hine and Stuart-Hobson
- The other MS in Ward 6 pale in comparison to Stuart-Hobson
- Create on this side of town a Hardy model MS - fully funded as Hardy is; AND a Deal LARGE MS model in full renovated building spending just as much as has been spent at Hardy and Deal over the last 5 years!
- Outreach to all communities vs. small knots of parents and principals making plans for themselves and imposing those views on the majority.
- "Greatest good for greatest number"
- Academic rigor and School Culture are missing at Jefferson
- \$\$\$ - and a concrete commitment to EQUITY
- Consideration of "small school" research and elements that have been shown to be effective
- Research-based qualities shown to make middle schools effective

#### Worksheet Question #3: What is most important to you, as a parent?

Theme	Verbatim comments
Academic Rigor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High quality staff and curriculum; advanced courses</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong foreign language program</li> <li>• Strong, engaging math curriculum</li> <li>• Significant improvement in academic rigor NOW!</li> <li>• Academic rigor by far. Focus on math/languages</li> <li>• Broad course offerings that allow students to explore a wide range of interests and disciplines</li> <li>• Broad opportunities in academics and extracurriculars for little E.S. kids to come to middle school and expand their horizons</li> <li>• Strong academic standards</li> <li>• Preparation for HS</li> <li>• High quality academics</li> <li>• Academic excellence</li> </ul>
School Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity and inclusiveness.</li> <li>• Safe, peaceful, inclusive environment</li> <li>• Creating a culture of academic excellence -- don't let kids get away with being "low math." Bring them up and get them confident</li> <li>• Treating children of all backgrounds with respect and teach kids to do the same</li> <li>• Positive school culture from students to teachers to administrators and support staff</li> <li>• "Living the Mission"</li> <li>• A safe, effective school with a culture of excellence</li> <li>• Safe and trusting learning environment where all kids can explore and grow</li> <li>• Inclusive school community</li> <li>• I want my middle school to be caring, open, rigorous, professional environment that engages families and the community</li> </ul>
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe environments conducive to learning and peer respect (I need to know bullying and other safety and behavior issues are addresses PROACTIVELY, so I know these won't be problems when my child attends.</li> </ul>
School staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get rid of poor teachers or find a way to train them and turn them into good teachers</li> <li>• Excellent teaching.</li> <li>• Diversity in school leadership: should reflect the diversity in school population.</li> <li>• High-quality, motivated teachers who are supported in efforts to differentiate instruction, teach core subjects well, and expand the traditional classroom (eg, outdoors, to museums, to the community...)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great teachers</li> <li>• Effective and inspirational administrator</li> <li>• Continuity of leadership and faculty</li> <li>• Quality teachers</li> </ul>
Program Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alignment of curriculum; arts, music, sport</li> </ul>
Extra-curricular Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality, content-driven after-school programs.</li> <li>• Extracurricular activities (sports, music, drama, clubs, etc.)</li> </ul>
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning can take place in any effective culture. Needs to be bolstered by strong academics and a good facility</li> <li>• Leadership and facilities hand-in-hand. Our kids are not guinea pigs.</li> </ul>

#### OTHER COMMENTS:

- Skills and character
- All of the items in the slide 10 are "no-brainers." They must be part of the school
- Putting my child in a school where I feel they can be successful at the time and in the future
- Feeling confident that I have my children in a school where they won't be embarrassed when relating to children from Virginia, Maryland and beyond.
- Most important is to have my students receive the educational preparation to compete with other children in the metropolitan area.
- Having a strong school - not for the District, but for any standards
- To support the school at home, instill self-discipline in my children, and hold my children accountable for their actions and grades. I have 3 kids, 17, 14, 11 and these are things we try to do.
- Middle schools or high schools are not supposed to specify on language/art/science or whatever. This is university jobs!
- Major capital investments in Stuart-Hobson. IB program. Move 5th grade back to Watkins.
- IB for Stuart-Hobson and Eastern would be a great vote of confidence for Ward 6 parents! Many parents tonight are unfamiliar with the IB model. Parent education necessary.
- I'm not really a Montessori stakeholder but I like the idea of an expanded Montessori school on Capitol Hill and as part of the Cluster. If the Montessori is expanded to pre-school (3) - 8th grade, they must also increase the number of classes per grade in order to make the program more available to more families.
- Continuation of Montessori through 6th grade, and ideally through 8th grade so that those kids can go directly to an IB or other HS in DCPS
- What will it take to make me confident in DCPS middle schools? Spend the money to renovate Eliot to be like Deal, then staff it with strong admin. and a full complement of courses!

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FEEDBACK ON THIS WARD 6 PROCESS:

- Future breakouts should not be school-based, rather organized around effective practices in middle schools or the 4 core components. We need to steer the conversation away from defensiveness about one's own school.
- Make efforts to educate participants about effective middle schools generally and current Ward 6 middle schools (SH, EH, Jefferson)